

# STUDY GUIDE: Kam Franklin

This study guide is to support virtual and in-person classes for students and teachers inspired by the movie *Respect* about the life of Aretha Franklin.

## Overview and Learning Objectives

In her master class, Kam Franklin describes how everything students learn in school can help prepare them for a career as a full-time musician. This Study Guide explores the ways that Southern hip hop reflects elements of African American culture. The learning objective: students will learn how elements of African American music and culture shaped the musical career of Kam Franklin.

## Essential Questions for Reflection Critical Thinking

- What influence did Southern hip hop have on Kam Franklin?

## Suggested Student Activities

Imagine that you, like Kam Franklin, would like to influence students in earlier grades to apply what they learn in school to grow their musicianship. Your goal is to use the following activities to develop a compelling demonstration for “your” 5th grade students.

### **Activity 1. Southern Hip Hop - Communalism**

This activity prepares you to create a sense of community with your 5th graders.

**Step 1.** In her master class, Kam Franklin insists that in order to do any kind of group work successfully, everyone has to have the same dream and be on the same team. Team members must learn how to speak with each other and grow with each other. Define the Africentric value of Communalism.

**Step 2.** In her master class, Kam Franklin describes how her group Suffer was heavily influenced by Southern Hip Hop and that it still inspires their sound. [Master P](#) is a well-known Southern hip hop artist. Play his 1996 hit [Bout It, Bout It](#) (the clip starts at 3:45; stop at 4:25 to avoid the N-word; continue through 5:10 (the end) if you intend to use the suggested Resources below for handling the N-word in class). As students listen to Bout It, Bout It, have them make a list of all the cities, states and artists that Master P says are ‘bout it ‘bout it.

**Step 3.** Read the following summary of an excerpt from the [Wikipedia article on Southern hip hop](#):

“Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, hip hop music was dominated by artists from the East Coast and West Coast. Los Angeles and New York City were the two main cities where hip hop was receiving widespread attention. The West Coast was mainly represented by groups like N.W.A. and Death Row Records, and the East Coast had people like The Notorious B.I.G. and groups like the Wu-Tang Clan. In the late 1980s, cities throughout the Southern United States began to catch on to the hip hop music movement.

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By the mid-1990s, Atlanta had become a center in southern hip-hop music. Local production crews such as Organized Noize played a huge part in helping the South become a center for hip hop music. OutKast became the first Southern artists to generate album sales like the powerhouse rappers on the East and West coasts. A defining moment for Southern rap was at the 1995 Source Awards. The duo Outkast had just been awarded Best New Artist, and within the tension that was the East Coast–West Coast feud, member André came up on stage and said, “But it's like this though, I'm tired of them closed minded folks, it's like we got a demo tape but don't nobody want to hear it. But it's like this: the South got something to say, that's all I got to say.” According to rapper T.I., “That's when it changed. That was the first time when people began to take Southern rap seriously.”

And this summarized excerpt in which [Master P describes Bout It, Bout It](#)

The rapper’s seminal hit “Bout It, Bout It” was a product of having “something to prove to the world,” he said. “I lost so many homies to the streets. I’m in the middle of the projects in New Orleans. I got a chance to put what I am doing on record and that’s what came out. That energy. I wanted to represent where I am from. Who I am. My homies, my hood, and also the world. People wasn’t into the South like that. You had to be from the West Coast or the East Coast to get that type of a fanbase. That record caught on on the East Coast. Caught on in the West. Caught on in the Midwest. It got people up out of they seats because people wanted to represent where they was from. I think that’s what that record did for the world.”

Ask students to reference their list of cities, states and artists to explain how Bout It, Bout It might have helped to create a sense of belonging and community. Among whom?

**Step 4.** Have students form pairs. Each person will make their own list of people they know **personally** who are great musicians. As they add to their list, they will explain to their partner who the person is and how they know them, e.g. school, performing ensemble, faith-based organization, neighborhood, family member, etc. They should add a brief summary of the information to each name on their list. Encourage students to share one of their profiles with the class and tell what they learned about communalism.

**Step 5.** Have the full group suggest, discuss, and decide what version of this activity they will lead their 5th grade students in. Assist them in carrying out their project with an actual 5th grade class. Bonus. Have students pick one person from their list, to whom they will write and send a thank you note expressing admiration and appreciation for their musical accomplishments.

### **Resources**

[Master P Digital Biography](#)

[Teaching the N-Word](#)

[Ta-Nehisi Coates has an incredibly clear explanation for why white people shouldn't use the n-word](#)

[Ta-Nehisi Coates on words that don't belong to everyone](#)

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## **Key Terms**

Communalism - the awareness of the interdependence of people. One acts in accordance with the notion that the duty to one's family and social group is more important than individual privileges and rights. Communalism is built on healthy relationships. We need healthy relationships.

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